

SEATRADE CRUISE SHIPPING CONVENTION 2001

MIAMI BEACH, FLORIDA

MARCH 5, 2001

"PASSENGER VESSEL SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENTAL
PROTECTION INITIATIVES"

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THANK YOU. GOOD MORNING ADMIRAL MITROPOULOS,
CAPTAIN VLAUN, CAPT THOMPSON, CAPT BROWN, LADIES
AND GENTLEMEN, IT IS AN HONOR FOR ME TO BE HERE
TODAY AS A PANELIST FOR THIS SESSION ON CRUISE SHIP
SAFETY, AND PARTICULARLY TO BE WITH MY
COLLEAGUE, ADMIRAL MITROPOULOS. AS THE DIRECTOR
OF THE COAST GUARD'S MARITIME SAFETY AND MARINE
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION PROGRAMS, I HAVE
ESTABLISHED EIGHT AREAS OF EMPHASIS.

WITHIN THOSE AREAS OF EMPHASIS PASSENGER VESSEL
SAFETY IS OUR HIGHEST SAFETY PRIORITY AND OF
PERSONAL INTEREST TO OUR COMMANDANT, ADMIRAL
JIM LOY, AS WELL AS TO MYSELF—YOU'LL HEAR MUCH
MORE ABOUT THAT FROM HIM AT HIS LUNCHEON
ADDRESS TOMORROW.

ADDITIONALLY, I HAVE REPRESENTED THE COAST GUARD ON MORE THAN ONE OCCASION TESTIFYING BEFORE CONGRESS REGARDING PASSENGER VESSEL SAFETY—THIS ISSUE IS VERY HIGH ON THEIR AGENDA AS WELL.

STATISTICALLY, ABOUT 11% OF NORTH AMERICANS CRUISE FOR A HOLIDAY WITH THAT FIGURE EXPECTED TO INCREASE. IN ADDITION, ABOUT 49% OF SHIPS AND 64% OF CRUISE SHIP BERTHS ARE IN AND AROUND THE CARIBBEAN. SO, YOU CAN SEE WHY WE ARE SO INTERESTED IN THIS ISSUE, BOTH FROM A PREVENTION AS WELL AS A RESPONSE PERSPECTIVE.

MOST CRUISE SHIPS OPERATING OUT OF THE U.S. ARE NON-U.S. FLAG. OUR COAST GUARD'S CURRENT PASSENGER VESSEL SAFETY PROGRAM CONSISTS OF A CONTROL VERIFICATION EXAMINATION PROCESS TO VERIFY COMPLIANCE WITH INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS AND SOME DOMESTIC REQUIREMENTS. THIS PROCESS BEGINS WITH THE INITIAL CONCEPT AND PLAN REVIEWS OF THE VESSEL, AFTER WHICH THE INITIAL CONTROL VERIFICATION EXAM IS CONDUCTED, FOLLOWED BY SUBSEQUENT ANNUAL EXAMS AND QUARTERLY RE-EXAMS AS THE VESSELS OPERATE IN AND OUT OF U.S. PORTS.

ALSO, OUR PARTICIPATION IN INTERNATIONAL MARITIME ORGANIZATION (IMO) ACTIVITIES FOCUSED ON PASSENGER VESSEL SAFETY, ALONG WITH OUR AUTHORITY TO INVESTIGATE CASUALTIES OF FOREIGN FLAGGED CRUISE SHIPS OPERATING IN U.S. WATERS OR OPERATING ANYWHERE WITH U.S. PASSENGERS, HELP FORM THE CORE OF OUR PASSENGER VESSEL SAFETY ACTIVITIES.

DO WE CONSIDER THESE CURRENT PREVENTION ACTIVITIES AND INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS TO BE ADEQUATE FOR THE FUTURE?

CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING TRENDS THAT MAY BOTH INCREASE AND MODERATE RISK TO SAFETY AND THE ENVIRONMENT AS WE LOOK TO THE FUTURE:

- AS NOTED BY ADMIRAL MITROPOULOS, THE CRUISE SHIP INDUSTRY IS GROWING AND EVOLVING AT A VERY RAPID RATE;
- LARGER AND FASTER VESSELS ARE BEING BUILT—SERIOUS DISCUSSION IS TAKING PLACE ABOUT EVEN LARGER VESSELS THAN WE'RE SEEING BUILT TODAY;

- WATERWAYS TRAFFIC OF ALL TYPES CONTINUES TO INCREASE;
- TECHNOLOGY LETS US OPERATE IN NARROWER WEATHER WINDOWS;
- PASSENGER VESSELS ARE OPERATING IN MORE REMOTE, LESS TRAVELED AREAS AND EXTREME CLIMATES FURTHER FROM ASSISTANCE;
- EVER INCREASING PUBLIC RIDERSHIP, INCLUDING MORE PASSENGERS WITH PHYSICAL LIMITATIONS AND MORE FAMILIES WITH YOUNG CHILDREN; AND,
- GENERALLY, THE PUBLIC'S ZERO TOLERANCE OF ACCIDENTS AND ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION OF ANY SORT.

AND, THIS “FUTURE”, IN MANY RESPECTS IS NOW. TODAY, CRUISE SHIPS CARRY A LARGE NUMBER OF PASSENGERS, AND WITH CREW UPWARDS OF 5000 PERSONS ONBOARD, LARGE ENOUGH TO OVERWHELM OUR IMMEDIATE SEARCH AND RESCUE CAPABILITIES. IN ADDITION, CRUISE SHIPS MAY OPERATE IN COLD WATER ENVIRONMENTS WHERE THERE IS MINIMAL RESPONSE TIME IN THE EVENT OF AN EMERGENCY. OR, AT THE EXTREME EDGES OF OUR SEARCH AND RESCUE AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY. WE ARE WEIGHING ALL OF THESE RISKS, AND WE KNOW THAT THEY ARE ON YOUR MIND AS WELL.

OUR SAFETY GOAL IN THE PAST AND FOR THE FUTURE IS VERY SIMPLE – NO PASSENGER DEATHS! I REALIZE THAT IS YOUR SAFETY GOAL AS WELL—AND THAT THE SAFETY RECORD OF PASSENGER VESSELS OPERATING FROM U.S. PORTS IS OUTSTANDING. THERE HAVE BEEN NO PASSENGER DEATHS IN 16 YEARS THAT CAN BE COUNTED AGAINST OUR SAFETY PROGRAMS. HOWEVER, ACCIDENTS CONTINUE TO OCCUR.

AND WE ALSO APPRECIATE ICCL'S RECENT EFFORTS TO ESTABLISH MANDATORY POLICIES FOR CRUISE SHIP PASSENGER AND CREW SAFETY, SECURITY, AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION. WE'RE DEFINITELY MAKING STEPS IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION TO ACHIEVE OUR COMMON GOAL, AND I THANK YOU FOR YOUR EFFORTS!

HOWEVER, NOTWITHSTANDING YOUR EXCELLENT SAFETY RECORD, THE STAKES REMAIN HIGH GIVEN THE VALUE OF YOUR PRECIOUS CARGO. CONSEQUENCE IS THE KEY WORD HERE. THE TRENDS AND POTENTIAL CONSEQUENCE REQUIRE US TO CONTINUOUSLY IMPROVE THE SYSTEM.

GIVEN THAT, WE ARE VERY PLEASED THAT THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE IMO HAS MADE PASSENGER VESSEL SAFETY A HIGH PRIORITY AND WE WOULD AGREE THAT THE IMO IS CLEARLY THE PLACE TO DEVELOP ANY FURTHER IMPROVEMENTS TO PREVENTION AND RESPONSE.

RECENTLY, I HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO VISIT A SHIPYARD IN EUROPE TO OBSERVE A NEW CRUISE SHIP UNDER CONSTRUCTION, AND TO CONDUCT A WALK-THROUGH OF THE VESSEL. I REALLY SENSED THE IMMENSITY OF THE SHIP, DESIGNED TO ACCOMMODATE MORE THAN 2000 PASSENGERS, AND I GAINED AN APPRECIATION FOR ALL OF THE INNOVATIONS DEDICATED TO THEIR RECREATION AND COMFORT.

BUT, GIVEN ALL THOSE INNOVATIONS, AND THERE HAVE BEEN SAFETY INNOVATIONS OVER THE YEAR, WE STILL LOWER LIFEBOATS TO THE RAIL, PASSENGERS ENTER THE BOATS OVER THE SIDE, AND EVACUATE THE VESSEL MUCH IN THE SAME WAY AS THEY DID WHEN I WAS A MARITIME SERVICE CADET NEARLY 35 YEARS AGO.

IS THERE A BETTER WAY? WE NEED TO CONTINUE TO INNOVATE HERE. A NUMBER OF THE PAPERS SUBMITTED TO IMO MSC 73 RAISE THIS ISSUE.

ALSO WHILE IN EUROPE, I HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS A PROJECT CALLED "SAFETY FIRST," WHICH IS A PROJECT TO EXAMINE INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO STRUCTURAL FIRE PROTECTION THAT WOULD PROVIDE SHIPOWNERS WITH MORE FLEXIBILITY TO COMPLY WITH CURRENT STANDARDS. IF THE CONCEPT OF AN A-60 BULKHEAD GOES BACK MANY YEARS, GIVEN TODAY'S IMPROVEMENTS IN STRUCTURAL FIRE PROTECTION MATERIALS, CAN WE DO BETTER THAN THAT WITHOUT INCREASING COST AND WEIGHT TO MAKE A SHIP MORE SURVIVABLE?

THE NEED TO MAXIMIZE THE CONCEPT OF THE CRUISE SHIP BEING THE BEST LIFEBOAT WHILE WE ENDEAVOR TO IMPROVE OUR ABILITY TO DEAL WITH POTENTIAL EVACUATION SCENARIOS IS PART OF OUR JOINT EFFORTS AS WELL.

ADM LOY FREQUENTLY CITES THE RESCUE OF PASSENGERS FROM THE PASSENGER SHIP PRINSENDAM WHERE A FIRE PROTECTION ENGINEER FROM COAST GUARD HEADQUARTERS, USING VESSEL PLANS, WAS ABLE TO PREDICT THE SPREAD OF THE FIRE AND ASSISTED COAST GUARD RESPONSE UNITS IN PLANNING A METHOD OF EVACUATION OF THE PASSENGERS FROM THE BURNING VESSEL. WELL, WITH TODAY'S TECHNOLOGY, THIS SAME THING COULD BE DONE VERY EASILY WITH SOFTWARE TO ALLOW BOTH SHIP'S DAMAGE CONTROL EFFORTS ON BOARD AND RESPONSE EFFORTS BY EXTERNAL ORGANIZATIONS TO BE ABLE TO EASILY PREDICT THE SPREAD OF FIRE AND FLOODING. COULD THIS SOFTWARE BE A PART OF THE SAFETY INFORMATION PACKAGE DELIVERED TO A NEW SHIP?

THREE PRINCIPLE THINGS THAT HAVE GOTTEN US WHERE WE ARE IN MARINE SAFETY: LEADERSHIP, INNOVATION, AND COOPERATION. IT IS WHERE THOSE CHARACTERISTICS ARE SHARED BY THOSE MEMBERS OF GOVERNMENT AND INDUSTRY THAT WE HAVE MADE THE MOST PROGRESS.

AND, GIVEN TRENDS THAT WILL IMPACT PASSENGER VESSEL SAFETY IN THE FUTURE, LEADERSHIP, INNOVATION, AND COOPERATION WILL BE REQUIRED IN EVEN LARGER DOSES IF WE ARE TO CONTINUE OUR VERY FINE SAFETY PERFORMANCE. THERE ARE GREAT OPPORTUNITIES HERE FOR THE INDUSTRY SHIPOWNERS AND SHIPBUILDERS ALIKE TO STEP FORWARD AS LEADERS IN INNOVATION FOR SAFETY IN COOPERATION WITH GOVERNMENT – FLAG AND PORT STATE ADMINISTRATIONS.

TOGETHER, WE MUST UNDERSTAND OUR COLLECTIVE SAFETY FUTURE AND TAKE THE LEAD IN DEVELOPING INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO PRESSING AND PROSPECTIVE PASSENGER VESSEL SAFETY ISSUES THAT THE FUTURE HOLDS FOR US.

THE CHANGES AND THE GROWING TRENDS IN THE PASSENGER VESSEL INDUSTRY RAISE SOME SAFETY CONCERNS THAT MUST BE ADDRESSED, THROUGH IMPROVEMENTS AND BY FOCUSING ON RISK REDUCTION MEASURES, IN ORDER TO ENSURE THE SAFE OPERATION OF THESE VESSELS AND TO PREVENT A MAJOR CASUALTY. INTERNATIONALLY, WE ARE WORKING TO ADDRESS THESE CONCERNS THROUGH THE IMO.

AS DESCRIBED BY ADMIRAL MITROPOULOS, AT THE 72ND SESSION OF THE MARITIME SAFETY COMMITTEE (MSC), THE IMO SECRETARY GENERAL, MR. WILLIAM O'NEIL, INITIATED A WORK PROGRAM ON THE SUBJECT OF PASSENGER SHIP SAFETY—SPECIFICALLY, WHETHER CURRENT IMO REQUIREMENTS, WHICH WERE DEVELOPED MANY YEARS AGO, AND WHICH HAVE BEEN PERIODICALLY AMENDED TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT NEWER TECHNOLOGIES AND INNOVATIONS IN THE CRUISE INDUSTRY, WILL ADDRESS ALL THE SAFETY ASPECTS OF PASSENGER SHIP OPERATIONS IN THE NEAR FUTURE GIVEN THE PROJECTED TRENDS OF THIS EVOLVING AND EXPANDING INDUSTRY.

MANY COUNTRIES RESPONDED TO THIS CHALLENGE INCLUDING THE U.S., WHICH ASSEMBLED AN INTERNAL GROUP OF EXPERTS TO EXAMINE THE ISSUE, CONDUCT A PRELIMINARY HAZARD IDENTIFICATION, DEVELOP A STRATEGY, AND PREPARE A SUBMISSION TO MSC 73. ICCL ALSO SUBMITTED A PAPER TO MSC 73.

THE U.S. SUBMISSION CONSIDERED EXISTING SHIPS AND FUTURE SHIPS SEPARATELY, WITH "EXISTING" SHIPS DEFINED AS THOSE CURRENTLY SAILING AND THOSE THAT ARE BEING BUILT OR WILL BE BUILT UNDER THE CURRENT REGULATORY REGIME.

FOR EXISTING PASSENGER SHIPS, WE EVALUATED HISTORICAL DATA FROM CASUALTIES INVOLVING PASSENGER SHIPS, RECENT STUDIES, AND U.S. PORT STATE CONTROL DATA. THREE AREAS WERE IDENTIFIED FOR FURTHER EVALUATION:

- 1) FIRE PREVENTION AND PROTECTION;
- 2) CREW TRAINING; AND,
- 3) EVACUATION AND RESPONSE PLANNING.

FOR FUTURE PASSENGER SHIPS, WE EVALUATED FUTURE TRENDS IN THE INDUSTRY AND CONDUCTED A PRELIMINARY RISK ANALYSIS. FIVE AREAS OF CONCERN WERE IDENTIFIED:

- 1) EGRESS/EVACUATION;
- 2) RESPONSE CAPABILITIES;
- 3) LACK OF SKILLED EMPLOYEES;
- 4) SECURITY CONCERNS; AND,
- 5) INCREASED OPERATIONAL COMPLEXITIES.

AT MSC 73, THE RESULTS OF OUR ANALYSIS WERE SUBMITTED, AND A WORKING GROUP WAS CONVENED TO DISCUSS THESE SAFETY CONCERNS. THE GROUP DEVELOPED A PRELIMINARY LIST OF "AREAS OF CONCERN" RELATED TO EXISTING PASSENGER SHIPS AND INVITED MEMBER STATES TO SUBMIT PAPERS COMMENTING ON THAT LIST TO THE UPCOMING MSC 74. TWO CONCERNS, EVACUATION ANALYSIS ON EXISTING SHIPS AND IDENTIFYING "EFFECTIVE" VOYAGE PLANNING, WERE SENT TO THE APPROPRIATE MSC SUBCOMMITTEES.

MSC 73 ALSO CREATED A CORRESPONDENCE GROUP UNDER THE LEAD OF THE U.S. TO DEVELOP "AREAS OF CONCERN" FOR FUTURE PASSENGER SHIPS, TO DEVELOP A PHILOSOPHICAL APPROACH APPLICABLE TO FUTURE PASSENGER SHIPS AND TO IDENTIFY APPROPRIATE RISK-BASED METHODS TO EVALUATE CONCERNS. THE REPORT OF THAT CORRESPONDENCE GROUP WILL BE SUBMITTED IN LATE MARCH TO MSC 74.

WE EXPECT THAT MSC 74 WILL BE SUCCESSFUL IN IDENTIFYING SPECIFIC CONCERNS FOR EXISTING AND FUTURE PASSENGER SHIPS THAT COULD BE PUT ON THE WORK PROGRAMS ON VARIOUS SUBCOMMITTEES, AND WE ALSO ANTICIPATE THAT THE WORKING GROUP WILL ALSO MEET AT MSC 75 IN MAY 2002.

WE ARE COMMITTED TO THE CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT OF PASSENGER VESSEL SAFETY, OUR NUMBER ONE MARITIME SAFETY PRIORITY, AND ARE COMMITTED TO WORKING WITH THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF CRUISE LINES AS A PARTNER IN PURSUING SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS AND OUR SHARED GOAL.

AND WE HAVE ACCOMPLISHED MUCH TO DATE TO REPRESENT THE VALUE OF OUR PARTNERSHIP TOGETHER.

WE HAVE IMPROVED COAST GUARD/ICCL COMMUNICATIONS THROUGH INTEGRATING ICCL PARTNERSHIP FEEDBACK INTO THE OUR FORMAL BUSINESS PLANNING—SUCH AS ICCL'S PARTICIPATION IN OUR ANNUAL SPRING PLANNING CONFERENCES; AND, INITIATING AND IMPROVING DIRECT COMMUNICATION BETWEEN CRUISE LINE REPRESENTATIVES AND COAST GUARD PERSONNEL VIA WORK GROUP TEAMS AND JOINT TECHNICAL WORK GROUP/PARTNERSHIP ACTION TEAM LEADERSHIP.

TOGETHER, OUR PARTNERSHIP IS IMPROVING EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS, INCLUDING THE JOINT SPONSORSHIP OF A MASS RESCUE OPERATION (MRO) WORKSHOP TO BE HELD IN MARCH 2001 IN JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA. THE WORKSHOP IS A FIRST STEP TO IDENTIFY GAPS AND DEVELOP GAP-CLOSING STRATEGIES IN PREPARATION FOR FOLLOW-ON MRO TABLETOP AND FIELD EXERCISES.

THE OBJECTIVE OF THIS EXERCISE IS TO TEST THE ABILITY OF COAST GUARD, INDUSTRY, AND OTHERS TO ADEQUATELY RESPOND TO A SIGNIFICANT CASUALTY ON BOARD A MAJOR CRUISE SHIP WITH 4000 PERSONS ON BOARD.

ALSO IN THE AREA OF EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS, WE HAVE PARTICIPATED IN NUMEROUS MAJOR EXERCISES SINCE 1997, IN ADDITION TO MANY LOCAL LEVEL EXERCISES, THEREBY IMPROVING INDUSTRY/COAST GUARD EFFICIENCY AND SHARING OF LESSONS LEARNED.

CONCLUSION

SO, IN SUMMARY AND CLOSING, PASSENGER VESSEL SAFETY IS OUR NUMBER ONE SAFETY PRIORITY – THE RECORD – TRENDS – CASUALTIES – CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT.

MUCH IS GOING ON TO ASSESS BOTH ACCIDENT PREVENTION AND RESPONSE POSTURES TO ENSURE THAT THE CURRENT FINE SAFETY RECORD WILL CONTINUE INTO THE FUTURE AND THAT CASUALTIES WILL DIMINISH IN THE FACE OF FUTURE TRENDS TOWARD GREATER CAPACITY AND INCREASED OPERATIONS. THAT THE PROBABILITY OF AN ACCIDENT WILL CONTINUE TO DIMINISH AS OUR COLLECTIVE ABILITY TO DEAL WITH ITS CONSEQUENCES IMPROVES. WE LOOK TO IMO MSC 74 TO SHOW US THE WAY AHEAD.

OPPORTUNITIES ABOUND FOR LEADERSHIP, INNOVATION, AND
COOPERATION BETWEEN INDUSTRY AND GOVERNMENT.
ONCE AGAIN, I WOULD LIKE TO THANK YOU FOR THE
OPPORTUNITY TO BE A MEMBER OF THIS PANEL AND
SPEAK WITH ALL OF YOU TODAY—AND I LOOK FORWARD
TO ATTENDING THE REMAINDER OF THIS SUCCESSFUL
AND PRODUCTIVE CONVENTION. I'M PLEASED TO
ENTERTAIN ANY QUESTIONS THAT YOU MIGHT HAVE.